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General Assembly

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Seventy-second session
First Committee

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Note by the Secretariat

1. The attention of the Disarmament and International Security Committee (First Committee) is drawn to the following provisions of General Assembly resolution 71/323, as highlighted in the first report of the General Committee (A/72/250 and Corr.1), which was considered by the Assembly at its 2nd plenary meeting, on 15 September 2017:

(a) Paragraph 20 of the resolution, in which the General Assembly reaffirmed existing relevant mandates related to the improvement of the working methods of the Main Committees, including section C of the annex to resolution 58/316, paragraphs 7 to 13 of resolution 59/313, cluster III of the annex to resolution 60/286 and resolution 69/321, in particular paragraphs 16 and 17 thereof (see A/72/250, para. 13);

(b) Paragraph 21 of the resolution, in which the Assembly requested each Main Committee to further discuss its working methods at the beginning of every session, and invited the Chairs of the Main Committees to brief the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the Work of the General Assembly during the seventy-second session on any best practices and lessons learned with a view to improving working methods, as appropriate (ibid., para. 15);

(c) Paragraph 22 of the resolution, in which the Assembly requested the Chairs of the Main Committees to organize handover meetings between the outgoing and incoming bureaux to exchange views on outcomes and the upcoming agenda, and invited the Chairs of the Main Committees to present a report to their successors on best practices and lessons learned (ibid., para. 16);

(d) Paragraph 26 of the resolution, in which the Assembly emphasized that the General Assembly and its Main Committees, at the seventy-second session, in consultation with Member States, should continue their consideration of and make proposals for the further biennialization, triennialization, clustering and elimination of items on the agenda of the Assembly, including through the introduction of a sunset clause, with the clear consent of the sponsoring State or States, taking into account the relevant recommendations of the Ad Hoc Working Group (ibid., para. 9);

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(e) Paragraph 31 of the resolution, in which the Assembly recalled rules 153 and 154 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly and encouraged the Chairs of the Main Committees and the Secretary-General to ensure observance of those rules, within their respective mandates (ibid., para. 64);

(f) The relevant provisions of the resolution concerning strict adherence by each speaker to the time limits in the Assembly and recommending the "all protocol observed" principle, especially when very limited time is available for debate (ibid., paras. 34 and 36);

(g) Paragraph 38 of the resolution, in which the Assembly reiterated its invitation to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the Chairs of the Main Committees, in consultation with the General Committee and Member States, to enhance the coordination of the scheduling of meetings of the Assembly, including high-level meetings and high-level thematic debates, with a view to optimizing their interactivity, effectiveness, and distribution throughout the session (ibid., para. 29);

(h) The relevant provisions of the resolution concerning the interim arrangement approved in decision 68/505 recommending a pattern for the rotation of the Chairs of the Main Committees until the seventy-third session, as well as the guidelines on the election of the Chairs and Rapporteurs of the Main Committees as contained in the annex to resolution 68/307, as well as the request of the Assembly to the Ad Hoc Working Group to prepare long-term arrangements concerning the election of the Chairs and Rapporteurs of the Main Committees with the aim of establishing a predictable, transparent and fair mechanism, in consultation with regional groups, and to submit them to the Assembly no later than at the seventy-second session (ibid., para. 19), and the invitation in the resolution to Member States to present proposals and to devote early attention to the matter of concluding a future arrangement, which would come into effect at the seventy-fourth session, with the annex to resolution 68/307 containing an option to be considered in that context;

(i) Paragraph 44 of the resolution, in which the Assembly encouraged Member States to seek gender balance in the distribution of Chairs of the Main Committees (ibid., para. 20);

(j) Paragraphs 47 and 48 of the resolution, in which the Assembly decided that the names of candidates for election by the General Assembly or by the Main Committees shall be communicated to the Secretariat, where possible, at least 48 hours prior to an election unless otherwise required by specific rules governing the elections concerned, and that those names shall be printed on the ballot papers, while additional space shall be provided on the ballot paper for inscribing other names, where applicable; and that on the day of election in the General Assembly or in the Main Committees the campaign materials distributed in the General Assembly Hall or in the Committee meeting room shall be limited to a single page of information regarding the respective candidates, with a view to preserving the decorum of the Assembly (ibid., para. 43);

(k) Paragraph 49 of the resolution, in which the Assembly encouraged Member States to make, to the extent possible, full use of the e-services provided by the Secretariat, in order to save costs, reduce the environmental impact and improve the distribution of documents, and, in that regard, requested the Secretariat to further improve, harmonize and, where appropriate, unify such services (ibid., para. 56).

2. At the same meeting, the General Assembly took note of:

(a) The fact that explanations of vote should be limited to 10 minutes; that, when the same draft resolution is considered in a Main Committee and in plenary

meeting, a delegation should, as far as possible, explain its vote only once, either in the Committee or in plenary meeting, unless that delegation's vote in plenary meeting is different from its vote in the Committee; and that delegations should exercise their right of reply at the end of the day whenever two meetings have been scheduled for that day and whenever such meetings are devoted to the consideration of the same item (ibid., para. 37);

(b) The fact that once the Assembly adopts a draft resolution or decision, it may no longer be co-sponsored. Likewise, when a Main Committee has adopted a proposal and recommends its adoption by the Assembly, this proposal may no longer be co-sponsored by a Member State (ibid., para 42).

3. Also at the same meeting, the General Assembly approved the recommendation that points of order be limited to five minutes (ibid., para 38).